

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

ENGLISH NATION.

Saturday, November 30. 1706.

THE last Review led me to promise you a brief History of the Commission of the general Assembly in Scotland, proceeding, as 'tis call'd, to address the Parliament against the Union.

And my Reason for this is to clear up the main Point, and so far vindicate that Reverend Assembly, from the Aspersions already rais'd upon them in England; either of forming Intrigues against the Union in general, Endeavours of cloging it with unreasonable Demands, or encroaching Designs upon the English Church.

And first, I find a general Charge upon the Assembly, that they appointed a Fast without acquainting or consulting the Parliament, and after it had been voted against there, with this Addition, that the Design of this Fast was to pray against the Union, and excite the People to oppose it.

That the Parliament debated the Subject of a Fast, is true; and that it was declin'd there, as not having been mov'd by the Church, whose Commission was then sitting, and whose Business it was, is likewise true; but that the Fast was rejected in the House, is not true.

The Commission were so far from thwarting the Parliament in this, that whereas the House seem'd to think a general Fast not convenient, they only appointed it in the several Presbyteries, leaving the Time and Day to themselves; in the Commission appointing this Fast, there was not the least Word, Expression, Intimation, or any Manner of Hint given against the Union; but to confess National Sins, and to pray to God to direct the Parliament in their Proceedings on the Matter of the Union, so as might

might issue to his Glory, and the Good of both Kingdoms.

In the solemnizing this Fast, at which I was present, I neither heard, nor have I met with any body else that has heard, any thing like seditious or tumultuary Expressions, but a general strict Adherence to the publick Directions—If any Indiscretions appear'd in any Place by the Warmth of particular Persons, I would have no body take too much Notice of that, lest I be able to direct them HOME to their Disadvantage; nor can it any Way affect the Church of Scotland in general, if it had been so.

I come now to their second Address—The Overture for the Act had been read in the Parliament, and was suddenly to be debated there; against which Time they thought reasonable, by Way of Address, to lay the following Heads before the Parliament.

Unto his Grace Her Majesty's High-Commissioner, and the Right Honourable the Estates of Parliament. The humble Representation and Petition of the Commission of the general Assembly of this National Church

SHEWETH,

THAT beside the general Address already made by us, for securing the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of this Church, and now under your Consideration, which with all Gratitude we acknowledge; there are some Particulars, which in Pursuance of the Design of our said Address, We with all Humility lay before your Grace and Lordships.

I. That the Sacramental Test being the Condition of Access to Places of Trust, and to Benefices from the Crown, all of our Communion must be debarr'd from the same, if not in Scotland, yet through the rest of the Dominion of Britain, which may prove of most dangerous Consequence to this Church.

II. That this Church and Nation may be expos'd to the further Danger of new Oaths from the Parliament of great Bri-

tain, unless it be provided, that no Oath, Bond or Test of any Kind, shall be requir'd of any Minister or Member of the Church of Scotland, which are inconsistent with the known Principles of this Church.

III. There being no Provision in the Treaty of Union, for securing of this Church by a Coronation-Oath; That therefore in the Coronation-Oath to be taken by the Sovereigns of great Britain, they be engaged to maintain the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of this Church, and the Rights and Privileges thereof, as now by Law established.

IV. That in Case the proposed Union be concluded, the Church will suffer Prejudice; unless there be a Commission for Plantation of Kirks, and Valuation of Teinds, and making up the Registers of that Court, which are burnt, and a Judicatory in Scotland for redressing Grievances, and judging Causes which formerly were judged by the Privy-Council, such as the Growth of Popery, and other Irregularities, and with which Judicature, the Church may correspond ancient Fasts and Thanksgivings.

V. Likewise we do humbly represent, that in the second Part of the Oath of Abjuration, in Favours of the Succession in the Protestant Line; there is Reference made to some Acts of the English Parliament, which every one in this Nation, who may be oblig'd to take the said Oath, may not so well know, and therefore cannot swear with Judgment. As also there seems to Us, some Qualifications requir'd in the Succession to the Crown, which are not suitable to our Principles.

VI. And in the last Place, in Case this proposed Treaty of Union shall be concluded, this Nation will be subjected in its Civil Interests to the British Parliament; wherein twenty six Prelates are to be constituent Members and Legislators: And lest our Silence should be construed to import our Consent to, or Approbation of the civil Places and Power of Church-men; We crave leave in all

“ Hu-

" Humility, and due-Respect to your Grace
 " and Honourable Estates of Parliament,
 " to represent, that it's contrary to our
 " known Principles and Covenants, that
 " any *Church-man* should bear Civil Offices,
 " or have Power in the Common-wealth.

" These things we humbly beseech your
 " Grace and Lordships to consider, and
 " provide suitable Remedies there-
 " to. And we shall pray, that the only
 " wise GOD may direct and guide your
 " Grace and Lordships in these, and all
 " other Matters that lye before you. That
 " the Result of your Considerations may
 " be the Glory of GOD, the Advantage of
 " Religion, the Peace and Comfort of Her
 " Majesty, (whose long and prosperous
 " Reign we heartily pray for) the Preser-
 " vation of Peace and Truth in both King-
 " doms, and the Welfare of this Church
 " and Nation in particular, the Satisfaction
 " of all who truly love and fear the Lord
 " therein, the Peace of our Consciences,
 " and our Comfort in the Day of our
 " Account.

*Signed in Name, in Presence, and at the
 Appointment of the aforesaid Commis-
 sion of the general Assembly, by
 Will. Withart, Moderator.*

These are the Articles which the Com-
 mission of the Kirk presented to the Parlia-
 ment, and which some People struggle to
 find such Fault with, as if the Kirk of *Scot-
 land* should intermeddle by it, with the
 Church-Settlement as established in *Eng-
 land*.

To clear up this Point, 'tis necessary to
 look back a little Way on the Posture of
 Affairs on both sides; in which perhaps a
 great Deal of Room may be found for more
 favourable Constructions of the thing, than
 the Persons, I mention, make of it, and the
 Ground of Jealousie be entirely taken
 away.

The *Presbyterian* Establishment in *Scot-
 land* is the Purchase of the Revolution, next
 under God's Providence; and the Memory
 of King *William*, however industriously by
 some People reproach'd, will ever be dear
 to the *Scots* Nation on that very Account,
 as under GOD he restor'd to the King-

dom of *Scotland* their Liberty of Religion,
 and establish'd it on Foundations, at least
 equally lasting with their Civil Rights, and
 included together with all their ruin'd Li-
 berties in their Claim of Right, which by
 their Laws since made, is confirm'd with
 all the Sanction and Solemnity possible, and
 made High-Treason for any one to impugn
 or infringe.

I am not disputing here any Point of
 Religion, 'tis not to my purpose, nor shall
 I argue the Civil Right of their new Estab-
 lishment—'Tis the Establishment they have
 credded by Vertue of their Demand to the
 Prince of *Orange*; they had the same Right
 to demand it, as we had to demand ours.
 The Claims of Right of both Nations are
 built on the same Foundations, and con-
 firm'd by equal Authority.

But what puts it beyond all Dispute, is,
 that it is the Settlement, on the Condition of
 which their Crown was accepted by King
William and Queen *Mary*, and is now en-
 joy'd by Queen ANNE——And therefore
 'tis the Settlement on the Foot of which
 they ought to be govern'd, and are govern-
 ed, with a general Satisfaction to the whole
 Country; a few *Dissenters* excepted, of
 whom, of their Conduct, Manner and Treat-
 ment by the Kirk, I shall speak by it self, and
 perhaps clear the Church of *Scotland* in that
 Case from some Reproaches, which few
 People in *England* think she can be clear'd
 of.

Scotland being thus legally establish'd, as
 we do not in *England* pretend to object a-
 gainst her Settlement, so neither does *Eng-
 land* desire to invade it; the QUEEN has
 been pleas'd to add to them frequent gra-
 cious and repeated Assurances of maintain-
 ing and supporting their Church-Govern-
 ment, as by Law establish'd, and at last on
 the Supposition of this Establishment to be
 continued and confirm'd, the Treaty of U-
 nion is begun.

In the Treaty there is not one Word of
 the Church concern'd, it being an express
 Preliminary, that the Treators should not
 meddle with that Affair, but either Parlia-
 ment are left to settle their respective
 Churches by Acts of Parliament, which af-
 terward being incorporated into the Trea-

ty,

ty, become part of the same, and are the Foundation of the Union. Thus both Churches are effectually and equally established.

In order to settle this Matter on the Part of *Scotland*, their Parliament being now sitting, the Overture of an Act for the Security of the Church was prepar'd, of which the last Paper gave you the Draught.

The Commission of the general Assembly at the same time sitting, the said Overture being debated among them, some were pleas'd to think, that in Point of Conscience they were bound, with Respect to the different Circumstances of the Churches, to make some formal Declaration of their dissenting from such things, as this Union would confirm——At the same time it does not at all follow, either that they are resolv'd not to unite on other Terms, or that any Endeavours are thereby design'd by them against the Church of *England*.

In Pursuance of this, their Articles appear rather as a Protest or Testimony of their not being Parties, to what by their own Principles they have disavow'd and depos'd in their own Church.

To come to the Point more directly, the Church of *Scotland* has profess'd themselves *Presbyterian* in Discipline, they have depos'd *Episcopacy*, and remov'd it entirely from its Government in their Church.

The Church of *England* is establish'd upon the Foundation of *Episcopacy*, and that Foundation is to be establish'd by the Union.

These two Churches are now to unite——It cannot be expected, that the Church of *Scotland*, by uniting with *England*, should be suppos'd either to approve an *Episcopal* Establishment, or put their Hands to the confirming that in a Neighbour Kingdom, which they have pull'd down in their own.

Nor does the Church of *England* want this approving or confirming, the Nature of the Union does not on either side require it, but leaves either Church to establish a civil Friendship; and as for any Approbation, such a Friendship may seem to imply on either side, the Formality of a Protestation exonerates and discharges either Church from the Imputation, and this is the Sum of the Matter, as will appear more largely in our next.

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